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PRIMITIVE RELIGION

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The study outline has been formulated by the Rev. Peter L. Blake, M. A., a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, and a member of the faculty of the School of Education, Fordham University, New York City.

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The authors of the various studies of the Missionary Academia express their own views which are necessarily independent of the National Council of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

OUTLINE

By Rt. Rev. Msgr. John M. Cooper
Washington, D. C.

Introduction

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2. What are religion and magic?

Religious life of non-literate peoples

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PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to present a brief sketch of the characteristics of primitive religions. As a start it seems wise to define our terms "primitive" and "religion".

Primitive Peoples.—By primitive peoples we ordinarily understand those who lack the art of writing. They are consequently commonly called pre-literate or, better, non-literate peoples. They were formerly called savages and barbarians, but these terms have been given up because they connote in our English language moral and kindred characteristics which are far from being universal among or confined to non-literate peoples. For a similar reason the term "uncivilized" peoples is now passing out of use. In the present paper we shall use "primitive" and "non-literate" as synonymous.

The great bulk, probably a good ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent, of non-literate peoples of the world possess a fairly advanced and complex technological, social, and religious culture. They are capable and intelligent farmers, herders, or both. They are more commonly sedentary or relatively so, especially the farming peoples, and live in villages that sometimes contain thousands of souls. Their dwellings are often very substantial and ingenious products of the carpenter's art, sometimes large enough to house comfortably a couple of hundred people or more in a single dwelling. Marked skill in pottery, weaving, metallurgy and a score of practical arts is commonly present, and often craftsmanship and artistry of a high order. Domestic, social, and political institutions are well organized, and frequently of great complexity. It is in this condition that the overwhelming majority of non-literate peoples live, in the still primitive sections of North and South America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, from Senegal to the South Seas in the Eastern Hemisphere and from the Canadian border and Alaska to Chile and Patagonia in the Western. Apart from the tribes of the great steppe and desert pastoral belt extending from west China to Dakar, the overwhelming mass of primitive peoples are farmers. To speak, for instance, of

the Negroes of Africa as "wandering savages" is a double error: they are not wandering nomads but sedentary farmers; as for their savagery, it becomes a nice moral question to determine who are more savage in the popular sense and in the eyes of God, they or we.

Scattered, however, here and there over the habitable globe, isolated from the currents of world intercourse, hidden away in remote jungles, deserts or mountain fastnesses, or clinging to the tips of archipelagoes and continental land masses, are found a small minority,—not more than from two to five percent at most of the nonliterate population of the world,—of appreciably more simple peoples. These are often called the "lower nomads" though not all of them are nomadic, and also "marginal peoples" on account of both their cultural and their geographical position. They have no domestic plants, and no domestic animals except the dog; and among many of them even the dog is not present. They have no metallurgy, and commonly lack pottery and weaving. They use very simple types of shelter, frequently transportable, of skins, bark, mats and other material. The tribes or, better, the bands are very small, ranging from twenty or thirty souls to two or three hundred, and are largely made up of kin. They have to wander a good deal in order to exploit the floral and faunal resources of nature for their maintenance. The family and kinship group are basic social institutions, while political structure among them is very rudimentary. In the New World these marginal peoples are mostly to the extreme north and extreme south of the continent. In the Old World, too, they tend to be found in extreme north and northeast Asia and far south Africa, in Australia and Tasmania, and scattered in out-of-the-way places along the more or less tropical belt from central Africa to Indonesia.

We may merely add in passing that with these marginal peoples as with us, very simple living,—and from the technological standpoint they live very simply,—may and commonly does go hand in hand with reasonably high thinking and moral standards. The present writer has spent many of his summers working among some of them. They are not perfect as regards intellect and morality but they average very well for this human race of ours. And many of them he would rate very high indeed on both intellectual and ethical scores.

In the following pages we shall refer to these very simple peoples as "marginal" peoples and to the more advanced farming and herding peoples previously mentioned as the "intra-marginal" peoples.

Religion: Definitions and Divisions.—Religion and magic have been defined in many different ways, and much ink has been spilt over the definitions. The long controversies over these definitions have to no small extent been wars about words. In the present paper we shall waive the lexicographical issue and shall use the two terms, merely for the sake of convenience, to denote two great related but contrasting swarms of facts.

Men may and do take two major attitudes towards the supernatural world: the attitude of persuasion, petition, or propitiation, as in our prayers, and the attitude of coercion, constraint, or compulsion, as in our "luck" observances. In many rites and observances it is not possible for us to make out plainly which of the two attitudes is present or dominant. In others, the two attitudes coexist side by side, or blend one into the other. In still others, one or other of the two attitudes is clearly the sole or dominant one.

In the present paper we shall use the term religion to denote those activities that are characterized by a persuasive or propitiatory attitude towards the supernatural world, and the term magic to denote those activities that are characterized by a coercive or compulsive attitude toward the supernatural world. Magic in this sense corresponds fairly well to what we in our culture understand by luck, as when, for instance, a rabbit foot is carried for good luck or the number thirteen is avoided as giving bad luck. Again, for clearness' sake only and for want of a better word, we shall use the term superhumanism to embrace both religious and magical activities.

In the senses here adopted, both religion and magic contain three elements—an intellectual one, an emotional one, and a volitional one. On their intellectual side, both imply or include a faith or belief, a philosophy or science. This philosophy or science may be very vague and crude and inconsistent, or may be very clear-cut and refined and logical, but in all cases there exists some theory of proximate or ultimate causes or processes. On their emotional side, religion and magic share in common a certain awe or reverence or

fear or affection toward the beings or forces with which they deal, an emotional stirring or "thrill" that is absent from purely natural and secular activities. On their volitional side, both religion and magic include a practical or conative activity or attitude toward supernatural beings or forces, or both, but this attitude differs as noted above, that of religion being persuasive, that of magic being compulsive. In other words both religious and magical beliefs and attitudes issue in definite types of behavior towards the supernatural world. This behavior takes the form of what we should call worship and very frequently the form of moral conduct. To these points of worship and morality we shall return later.

The foregoing analysis perhaps oversimplifies the enormously complex phenomenon of primitive religion and magic, but, so far as it goes, is true to the facts we are describing.

Religion and magic as here defined are not identical with philosophy or science. They have in common with philosophy and science a theory of ultimate and proximate causes and processes, but they have something over and above what a philosophy or science has. A clear-cut belief even in a Supreme Being who is the maker of all things, the benevolent ruler of the universe, and the moral lawgiver, falls short of being a religion and remains a sterile philosophy unless there be present emotional and volitional attitudes and behavior toward this Supreme Being on the part of the believer. An undoubting conviction that the north wind is a spirit or is controlled by one, or building a snow man to bring cold weather, falls short of being religion or magic and remains a bit of erroneous theoretic or applied science, unless similar emotional and volitional attitudes accompany the belief or act. It is hardly necessary to add that magic, in the sense we are using it, is something quite different from sleight-of-hand, although tricks of legerdemain are very commonly part of the stock-in-trade of professional or amateur witch doctors and shamans.

We have purposely left out the terms totemism and fetishism which a generation ago were commonly listed as major types of magico-religious systems. In contemporary usage, the term totemism is mostly employed to denote a particular type of complex social phenomenon which does not interest us here. Animal worship and totemism are very different things and should not be confused. A fetish may be described as a material object supposed to have powers

to bring good luck or bad luck or to be the representation or dwelling place of a spirit who can aid the worshiper. In this accepted sense fetishes are extremely common in nearly all cultures, primitive and others. The rabbit foot previously referred to would, for instance, be a fetish. We may say, too, in passing, that idolatry, in the sense of worship paid to a sheer graven or painted image as such, probably occurs nowhere among any non-literate people. The worshiper may for instance prostrate himself and place a food offering before such an "idol". But it would be an utter error on our parts to think that he is so stupid as to worship idols or stocks or stones in themselves. He may be non-literate but he is not a fool. The non-literates are, so far as science can judge, no whit less intelligent than so-called civilized men. He worships not the idol but a spirit represented by or conceived as dwelling in or near or as working through the idol.

So much for definitions and distinctions. A few words must now be appended upon the various subdivisions of religion and magic.

Religious activities may be divided in many ways. For our present purpose they may conveniently be classified in accordance with the various classes of supernatural beings who are supplicated or propitiated. These beings may be divided into four major classes: Ghosts, or beings who once lived on earth as human beings; spirits or lesser beings who were never men; gods, that is, ghosts or spirits who enjoy a certain marked eminence among their supernatural fellows; the Supreme Being, God, who stands alone and supreme, or a near-Supreme Being, who easily ranks first and foremost in the supernatural world.

In accordance with this fourfold classification of supernatural beings, we have four great types of religion: Manism, or the worship of ghosts or ancestors; animism, or the worship of spirits; polytheism, or the worship of gods; monotheism, or the worship of the Supreme Being.

Monotheism in its strict sense is the worship of a Supreme Being conceived of as the sole creator and supreme master of the universe. It excludes and is "intolerant" of belief in and worship of beings or forces thought to be more or less independent in origin or power of the Supreme Being. In ethical monotheism, the Supreme Being is also the author and upholder of the moral law. Among many

peoples, primitive and civilized, the Supreme Being is conceived of rather as a quasi-Supreme Being or a near-Supreme Being, one who is in a general way the maker of the universe, but not necessarily of all beings or things in it; worship of him is not exclusive, but is instead both in theory and in practice quite "tolerant" of magical, manistic and animistic rites and observances; his relation to the moral law, either as author or upholder, is often so slight as to be practically non-operative or non-existent. To these various modifications and attenuations of strict monotheism or ethical monotheism we shall in the present paper give the name of theism.

The word "spirit", as employed above, should not be interpreted too literally. Most "spirits", and for that matter, most ghosts, gods, and Supreme or near-Supreme Beings, are not conceived of as being purely spiritual and incorporeal. Most of them are supposed to have some kind of a body or corporeal part. This body may be gross and ponderable and palpable, like our own bodies, or it may be tenuous and light and wraith-like, but more commonly "spirits" are not utterly incorporeal.

Magical activities are variously divided—into imitative and contagious, positive and negative, public and private, "black" and "white," and so forth. Into these divisions it is not necessary for us to enter in detail. We shall here deal with magical practices as a whole.

The division we have adopted of the bewilderingly complicated and shifting phenomena of superhumanism may be put schematically as follows:

Superhumanism

- Religion
  - Manism
  - Animism
  - Polytheism
  - Monotheism (Theism)
- Magic

And now, having defined and divided these major types of superhumanism, we may proceed to outline in a general way their respective distributions over the primitive or non-literate world.

1. Belief Systems

From the abundant factual evidence at hand, we can say with all confidence that superhumanism is an absolutely universal phenomenon. Every tribe or people that has ever been discovered has some form of it.

We can with practically equal confidence go farther and say that both religion and magic are of universal distribution. Often it is difficult to determine whether in a given rite or series of rites the magical or the religious attitude is the sole or dominant one. A clear case, however, of a tribe lacking all traces of magic has still to be found. And the same may be said of religion.

Sometimes, for instance, the aboriginal Australians are cited as religionless magicians. It is seemingly true that over most of Australia the magical rather than the religious attitude is the dominant one. But the former is far from being the sole and exclusive one. We shall, for want of space, give just one illustration of religion proper in Australia—from the Euahlayi tribe, of New South Wales. The Euahlayi believe in a Supreme Being, Byamee. "Prayers for the souls of the dead used to be addressed to Byamee at funerals. . . . Byamee is supposed to listen to the cry of an orphan for rain. . . . At some initiatory rites the oldest medicine man, or Wirreenun, present addresses a prayer to Byamee, asking him to give them long life, as they have kept his law" (Parker, The Euahlayi Tribe, 8, cf. 79-80). Even among the Arunta of Central Australia, Spencer and Gillen, who with Strehlow are our chief authorities for this central area, while assuring us that the performance of the elaborate Intichiuma ceremonies "is not associated in the native mind with the idea of appealing to the assistance of any supernatural being," have nevertheless given us numerous details of both positive and negative propitiatory practices towards both departed souls and ancestral spirits believed in and feared or cherished by the natives (Native Tribes of Central Australia, 170, 498, 510, 516, 521; cf. also Strehlow, Die Aranda- und Loritja-Staemme, III, i, 8-9).

Animism and manism are universal or nearly universal, although differing widely in relative importance from region to region. Manism is, for instance, of major, though not exclusive, importance

in aboriginal central African religion. It is found, in traces at least, over all or most of the American continent but, on the whole, animism seems to have struck much deeper root than has manism in American Indian religious practices. Polytheism is often with difficulty distinguishable from manism and animism, there being no sharp line dividing it from these latter. It is very common, covering most of the world, but is apparently not universal.

Belief in a Supreme or near-Supreme Being—who may be anything from a strictly monotheistic creator, benevolent ruler, and moral lawgiver, to a very shadowy, distant, non-resident deity, little if at all concerned with human affairs—is very widespread. It is found among two-thirds to three-quarters or perhaps even more of the non-literate peoples of the world. It is not, however, universal. At least, a considerable number of tribes and peoples who have been long and sympathetically studied by thoroughly equipped missionaries,—including, for instance, such outstanding living Catholic missionary-scientists as Father Berard Haile, O.F.M. for the Navaho Indians and Father Morice Vanoverbergh, C.I.C.M. for the Isneg tribe of Northern Luzon, P. I.,—and by ethnologists are definitely reported as lacking any notion of a Supreme or even near-Supreme Being. Negatives are notoriously unreliable in this particular field of supreme-being beliefs, but it is highly improbable that so many of our best and most sympathetic observers should be utterly mistaken.

The Supreme Being is commonly, but not always, regarded as the creator or fashioner of the world and of men. He is often, but by no means always, looked upon as the author and upholder of the moral law. Not infrequently, in fact, the Supreme Being, while conceived of as the maker of the world and the benevolent ruler of all things, is thought to be interested chiefly in men's ritual observances towards Him, and only mildly or not at all in their social and moral obligations toward one another. In practically all cases, however, the Supreme Being is regarded as in the main benevolently inclined toward men or at least as not malevolently inclined. Very commonly, indeed, He is looked upon as so benevolently inclined that prayer or other worship is considered quite superfluous, or else He is appealed to only in the gravest and rarest emergencies. In many cases, where there exists a fairly clear concept of a Supreme Being, no cult to speak of is paid Him, except

the tenuous negative cult of not showing Him irreverence in word or deed. In many of these cases, He is thought to have no very active interest in mankind—and mankind reciprocates. In such instances, belief in the Supreme Being remains almost entirely within the field of the philosophical and speculative, with only an infinitesimal dash of the religious proper.

On the other hand, among a great many non-literate tribes and peoples, worship, supplication, and propitiation of a very clearly conceived Supreme or near-Supreme Being holds the premier place in the religious consciousness and rites of these tribes and peoples, or at any rate stands out quite prominently in their religious life. Rarely, or never, however, do we find a pure and exclusive ethical monotheism, a monotheism that zealously and jealously bars out and frowns upon the practice of magic and the worship, supplication and propitiation of ghosts and animistic spirits. In practically every instance, alongside of theism flourishes vigorously and undisturbed some species of manism, animism, or magic, or, as more commonly, of all three.

A pretty fair summary of the case would be this: An exclusive and "intolerant" ethical monotheism is rarely if ever found among non-literate peoples, but a form of theism or Supreme-Being worship approaching in greater or lesser measure to such monotheism is found very commonly among primitive peoples, among at least one-half of them, and perhaps among two-thirds or even more of them.

The five chief components of superhumanism—magic on the one hand, and religion, with its four major types, manism, animism, polytheism, and theism, on the other—are widely spread among both the marginal and intramarginal peoples, but not in the same proportions. Important quantitative differences prevail, particularly as regards magic, manism and animism.

We seemingly nowhere find among either the marginal or the intramarginal peoples exclusive ethical monotheism, an ethical monotheism that rigidly bars and is intolerant of all magic, manism, and animism. One of the nearest approaches to pure ethical monotheism among the marginal tribes is apparently the theism found by Father Vanoverbergh among the pygmy Etas of the Philippine Islands.

How widespread belief in and worship of a Supreme Being or

near-Supreme Being is among the marginal peoples cannot be stated with statistical accuracy. Many of them,—for example, the extinct Tasmanians, the Toala of Celebes, the Kubu of Sumatra,—have never been adequately investigated. In not a few of the other cases, the evidence is far from being as clear and full as would be desired, or as unexceptionable as ethnological technique demands. Nevertheless it seems safe to say that among a good majority, although not all, of the marginal peoples who have been studied, a theism approaching here closely and there remotely to monotheism has been discovered.

As to whether theism is more widely spread among the marginal or among the intramarginal peoples, it is not easy to determine. Comparison has to be made between two vast, tangled masses of very complicated and often very questionable evidence. Probably, however, all things considered, and allowing for the rapidity with which the evidence for theism among the marginal tribes has accumulated in the last decade or two, the generalization may be tentatively ventured that there is a slightly or appreciably greater amount of theism proportionately among the marginal peoples than among the intramarginal peoples.

When we turn to the question of the comparative prevalence of magic, manism, and animism among the marginal and among the intramarginal peoples, the answer can be given much more definitely and confidently. Magic, manism, and animism are well nigh universal in both marginal and intramarginal culture. Or, to put it a little more exactly, one or other of the three is found thriving in every known tribe, marginal or intramarginal. But a significant generalization is emerging more and more clearly from our enormous storehouses of facts bearing on primitive superstitions. The generalization is this: Magic, manism, and animism are on the whole much more elaborately developed and much more preponderant and complex among the intramarginal peoples on the whole than among the marginal peoples taken en masse. What Dr. Paul Sarasin said many years ago of one of the marginal peoples, the Toala, that they are "unsophisticated in superstition," can with substantial truth be predicated of many of the other marginal peoples.

Ordinarily the marginal peoples are not without a certain dread of ghosts and animistic spirits, but no hordes of truculent ghosts and malignant demons hound them through life as they so com-

monly hound the intramarginal peoples. The rank jungle-like growth and teeming complexity of magical, manistic and animistic beliefs, practices and observances that are so characteristic of the average intramarginal people are wanting among the average marginal people. Among these latter there appears to prevail a relative simplicity in superstitions, just as there prevails a relative simplicity in most other departments of their culture.

Broadly speaking, the general rule appears to hold, that the lower one goes down in the scale of technological culture the less does he find of the three elements of magic, manism, and animism, which constitute from ninety to ninety-nine percent of the superhumanism of the intramarginal or more advanced non-literate peoples of the world.

2. *Attitudes*

The attitudes towards supernatural beings range through the whole gamut from deep hatred to profound reverence and even love, from abject fear to most joyous and confident hope, depending largely on the nature of the being as conceived by the worshiper. If the supernatural being worshipped is conceived of as friendly and beneficent then the usual attitude is one of hope, expectation, kindliness, reverence or even affection and love, although in most cases there may be a definite background of circumspect awe or prudential fear. Towards supernatural beings conceived of as unfriendly and maleficent, there is ordinarily no question of reverence, joy, affection or such emotions. Prayers or gifts may be offered to the unfriendly spirit to cajole or bribe him to avert his anger or revenge or ill will, but there is no question of reverential or affectionate worship. The attitude would be more like that of a laundry owner who gives money to racketeers to avert sabotage. "Devil worship" is consequently not a phenomenon of primitive religion, in the sense of a reverential or affectionate homage paid to evil spirits. The nearest approach to what the term "devil worship" connotes in English is the utilization of supernatural forces or beings in certain types of sorcery or black magic for inflicting harm and even death, according to native belief, upon human beings,—in other words something very like our own witchcraft and hexe beliefs and practices.

3. Activities

So much for basic creeds and prevalent attitudes. We now pass on to the activities stemming from these beliefs and attitudes: worship activities and moral activities.

a. *Worship.*—The two chief forms of worship in primitive religions are prayer and sacrifice. Prayer in one form or another is, so far as we know, found in all primitive religions without exception. At times it is hard to draw the line between prayer to personal beings and magical formulae intended to control impersonal supernatural forces. Nearly all primitive prayer is prayer of thanksgiving and particularly of petition. Petitions are usually for food, cure or prevention of illness, protection against natural hazards and human enemies. Most primitive prayers fall within the petitions: "Give us this day our daily bread" and "Deliver us from all evil." Prayers for forgiveness are much more rare, and still rarer perhaps, in fact almost non-existent, are prayers for spiritual strength against temptation, or divine help to lead better moral lives. All in all, primitive peoples on the average appear to pray quite as much as, if not more than, most "civilized" men and women.

Sacrifice as found in primitive religions may be defined or described as the giving or offering of some material possession, usually prized as of intrinsic or of symbolic worth, to a supernatural being or beings, the giving itself being signified by expropriation of the object through destruction, segregation, or other process. The essential idea is that of gift or donation. Only in a minority of cases is primitive sacrifice accompanied by sacrificial communion participated in jointly by those making the sacrifice. Inasmuch as sacrifice was universal in the cultures of the Mediterranean and adjoining regions, it used to be thought that sacrifice was common to all religions. Such, however, is not the case. It is extremely widespread, but is not universal. For instance, there are no sacrifices among any of the aboriginal tribes of the whole Australian continent. And there are many other peoples who lacked sacrifice, such for instance as the Yahgans of the extreme tip of South America.

Sacrifices are of many kinds. The two chief ones are: first-fruit sacrifices and blood sacrifices. First-fruit sacrifices consist of the offering of the first fruit of crops or herds, or, among hunting peoples who have no domesticated plants or animals, of a first and

choice bit of killed game or of wild plants or roots gathered. The blood sacrifices referred to are mainly those of animals killed ritually as an offering to supernatural beings. These blood sacrifices are almost exclusively found among peoples who have domesticated animals. To such blood sacrifice of animals is closely allied human sacrifice. In fact the more common form of human sacrifice is the killing of slaves and captives, who in a certain sense may be looked upon as "domesticated" human beings.

Besides prayer and sacrifice there are innumerable acts and things which are part of or serve in worship; they are such acts as blessings, prostrations, fumigations, pilgrimages, processions, oaths, vows, ordeals, exorcisms, and so forth; such things as sacred images, trees, places, rocks, mountains, groves, and so on. The very listing would require pages. There is an unending and bewildering variety of them. Many of the acts are accompanied by prayers or are themselves gesture prayers.

b. *Morality.*—Let us now turn to the relations of religion and magic to morality. We with our Christian background take for granted that God is interested in man's ethical behavior and that he is the rewarder and punisher in this life and in the next of our moral conduct here on earth. In a great many primitive religions there is likewise this close relationship between belief and moral conduct. The Supreme Being is very commonly believed by primitive peoples to be interested in man's conduct and to reward or punish him accordingly. Among many other non-literate peoples it is not the Supreme Being, but ghosts or ancestral beings or animistic spirits who are concerned with morality among men.

Among, however, a very great number of people,—perhaps one-half of them, we do not have statistical data on the question,—neither the Supreme Being, if there is belief in a Supreme Being at all, nor ghosts nor ancestors nor animistic spiritis are concerned about man's moral conduct. In other words there is a complete or near-complete divorce between religion and morality. Among still other peoples there is a connection between moral conduct and purely magical conceptions. For instance, breaches of the current social prohibitions against the marriage of too-close kin are followed *automatically*. without the interposition of any personal supernatural being, by misfortune to the delinquents, by epidemics, blight, or other evil that may affect the whole community or tribe.

To round out our picture of primitive religions a few words may be added regarding primitive conceptions of the future life although many of these conceptions remain purely in the realm of philosophy, so to speak, as they have no dynamic influence on human conduct. All non-literate peoples, or practically all,—there may be an extremely rare exception here and there,—believe in the survival of the "soul" or of some incorporeal or near-incorporeal element in man. This idea of survival does not always imply absolute immortality. Survival among some peoples is thought to be of limited duration.

Among some tribes the future life is envisaged as being very much like the present life or a somewhat happier one, and all participate in it equally regardless of whether their lives here have been good or bad. Among a very great number of other peoples, however, the future life is happy or unhappy in accordance with the individual's moral behavior here on earth. Such happiness or unhappiness respectively may accrue either automatically, without reward or punishment meted out by any supernatural being, or through reward or punishment bestowed either by the Supreme Being or by other supernatural beings.

Conclusion

From all that has been briefly summarized in this paper, it is obvious that the missionary has in his prospective or newly won converts much that he can build on. So far as our anthropological and psychological evidence goes there is in man no religious instinct, that is, a tendency to religion inherited as he inherits the color of his eyes or the texture of his hair. Actually, however, religion is a universal phenomenon. A people without religion has never been discovered and there is no probability at all that any such people ever will be discovered.

In these primitive religions there is much that is bad and much that is missing. On the other hand there is much that is good. It is perhaps going too far, in the light of our recent insights into primitive religions, to say without qualification that the *anima humana* is *naturaliter christiana*. But there is certainly a great deal in primitive religions which Christianity can build upon. Thus grace can build not only on nature, but also on culture.

The task of the missionary is, *mutatis mutandis,* like that of a retreat-master, the triple one of helping to eliminate the bad, to confirm the good, and to supply the missing. In eliminating the bad the missionary has to act with caution and foresight lest in pulling up the weeds he pull up also the good grain. A human skull exposed in a garden patch to bring evil upon crop-thieves represents a superstition found here and there in primitive life. The missionary must sometimes tolerate, without of course approving, certain such superstitions and certain other of the less deadly evils, until an equally efficacious substitute sanction has been provided through Christian motivation.

Need it be added that the missionary's task is a long-time one? Even after nineteen hundred years of Christian background Western civilization and we members of it are only mildly affected by the innermost unselfish spirit of Christianity. God is patient. The missionary has to be.

Note:

To cover the field the foregoing summary has been confined to broad outlines and generalizations. For presentation to any group orally, concrete facts and illustrations should best be used freely. Abundant illustrative facts and incidents may be easily found in such sources as the following:

files of current missionary periodicals
files of anthropological periodicals, such as American Anthropologist, Anthropos, Primitive Man, Africa, Oceania
Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
R. H. Lowie, Primitive Religion, N. Y., 1924
A. LeRoy, The Religion of the Primitives, tr., N. Y., 1922
J. M. Cooper, Relations between Religion and Morality in Primitive Culture, in Primitive Man, 1931, 4:33-48
Same, Higher Culture of Early Man, in Ecclesiastical Review, 1914, 51:259-83.

Study Outline

PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS

INTRODUCTION

Who are primitive peoples?

How do 95% of them already possess a fairly advanced social and religious culture?

Mention a few places in the world where we would find such primitive peoples today.

From what you have heard or read, contrast religion and magic.

RELIGIOUS LIFE OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

In a sentence, define Manism; Animism; polytheism and monotheism.

Explain what is meant by this statement: An exclusive and "intolerant" ethical monotheism is rarely if ever found among non-literate peoples, but a form of theism or Supreme-Being worship is found very commonly among primitive peoples.

ATTITUDES

Explain the reasons and emotions that make primitive peoples' attitude toward supernatural beings range through the whole gamut from deep hatred to profound reverence and even love.

ACTIVITIES

(a) Worship. Mention the two chief forms of worship in primitive religions.

(b) Morality. In a few words, explain why even in some forms of primitive religions, there is a close relationship between belief and moral conduct.

What are some of the ideas primitive people have toward a future life.

CONCLUSION

From what we have heard in this lecture, it is obvious that the missionary has much to build upon among non-literate peoples. Mention a few items.

AMERICA'S BLESSED OPPORTUNITY

Certainly there is much to be done at home, particularly when we recall that sixty million of our American people profess no religious affiliation. This fact alone would suggest an urgency that brooks no delay. It is now our privilege to share the precious heritage of our faith with those of our countrymen who have been deprived of the knowledge and love of Christ. This non-Church going population prompts immediate action to make home mission needs an integral part of the great apostolate for which the Holy Father begs our interest.

Quite naturally, the events of today would seem to divert all things, all effort and all persons to the pursuit of activities which will bring a swift and successful culmination of the war. Yet Archbishop Spellman in his Mission Sunday message assures us that "A light of consolation to His Holiness is the continued virile demonstration of the true mission spirit throughout the world. Despite the conflicts of war, despite military occupation, despite exile from some fields, the mission endeavor continues in old missions and is taken up in new fields. Despite the war and its ravages, new missionaries, priests, brothers and sisters have been leaving the shores for distant lands to bring knowledge of God and the consolations of the Prince of Peace to otherwise forgotten people."

As our nation is already preparing its reconversion program so we who are interested in the mission work of the Church must begin our post war planning. We must intensify now, in our own land, the training of the personnel which will form the ranks of Christ's army, ready to carry His doctrines to the ends of the earth. This is a challenge to the Catholic youth of America which should receive serious attention in our post war planning program.

The flash of steel and the roar of guns must not deafen our minds and our hearts to the fact that God wishes all men to be brought to His knowledge and love. Our beloved Pontiff, Pope Pius XII, begs us to organize our resources so that we may become co-partners with Christ in the great work of redemption.

His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, "has become a beggar for his distant brothers in Christ, for missionary charity rises above the trenches of hate and constitutes one of the few bonds of love not yet broken among all people." It is the privilege of American Catholics, as leaders in mission activity, to weld together the bonds of love among all peoples. It is their response to the appeal of the Holy Father for prayer and sacrifice through The Society for the Propagation of the Faith that will insure the restoration of the charity of Christ to the world and turn today's seeming defeat into the greatest mission victory the world has ever known.

(EXCERPT FROM NATION-WIDE BROADCAST OF MONSIGNOR THOMAS J. McDONNELL, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH).